



Annual Report to the Community 2011

# THE CITY OF ROCKFORD

ILLINOIS, USA

Human Services Department  
A Community Action Agency



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## BOARD MEMBERS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

### “Engaging All Citizens in Building Stronger Communities”

The City of Rockford Human Services Department is the designated Community Action Agency for Winnebago and Boone Counties. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are multi-faceted human service delivery systems capable of locally administering short term and long term human services programs. CAAs work to engage elected and appointed public officials and agencies, private sector representatives and organizations, and low income residents in collaborative efforts to address the causes and conditions of poverty.

## CONTACT US AT:

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For further information, please contact the office at:

Administration – 815/987-5782

Community Services – 815/987-5711

Head Start/Early Head Start – 815/987-5480

TTY – 815/987-5718

Or visit our web link at:

<http://www.rockfordil.gov/human-services.aspx>

## Message from Board Chair CRYSTAL WALKER

Our local Community Action Agency (CAA) continues to offer services to citizens in both Winnebago and Boone Counties to assist families in the relief of stressors that are directly related to poverty. However, the CAA does not just limit their support to families but to other community entities, and is willing to go the extra mile when they have the ability to. The CAA staff and Board members continue to do this with the same integrity and eagerness as they always have while struggling through tough economic times. While we have all at some point come face to face with the effects of the financial instability that our country is currently plagued with, our local CAA works diligently to develop and implement innovative ideas (i.e. Community Gardens) that encourage a spirit of hope to cultivate healthier communities.

As Board Chair, I am honored to work with a phenomenal group of individuals that believe we are about the entire community and we are dedicated to the work in helping people help themselves.



## Message from Executive Director GEORGE DAVIS

This year's Annual Report to the Community is dedicated to a refocus on the mission and role of our work as a "Community Action Agency". Our Department is one of 1400 local organizations covering virtually every county in the nation that have evolved over the past forty-seven plus years history of the Community Action movement. The Community Action Agency (CAA) mission is addressing the causes and effects

of systemic poverty. Community Action was founded on a philosophy of community engagement, recognizing that all members of the community have a stake in the effects of poverty and income disparity.

CAA methods are guided by a simple and compelling idea: "Maximum, feasible participation" of those most immediately affected by poverty, along with those in the public and private sectors of the community, to remove barriers and create opportunity.

CAAs are facilitators and enablers of change and movement toward self-sufficiency. Federal resources provided to local CAAs are used to address both the immediate effects of poverty (i.e. provide direct services) as well as the systemic causes (i.e. lack of quality education, poor health outcomes, abuse and exploitation). There is not a list of required program services that

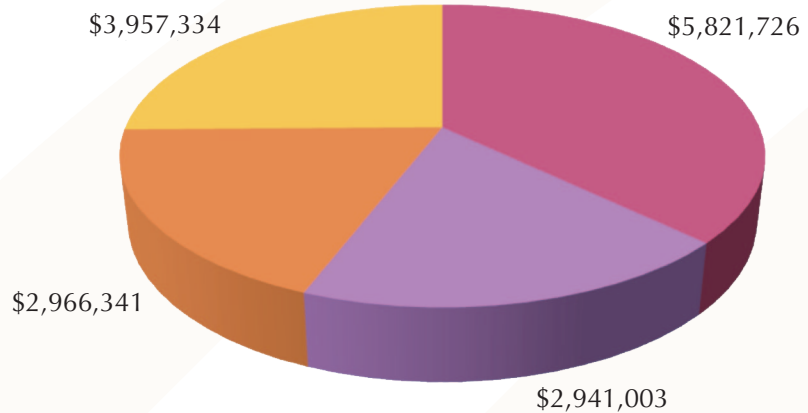
CAAs must provide. Rather, the CAA Boards and staff along with input from other stake holders, determine the priorities, programs and services to be provided locally.

CAAs also seek out and develop collaborations, partnerships and financial resources to address identified community needs. For the past fifteen years, local CAAs have operated under an outcomes framework which guides our work. As you will see in this report we have reported some of our most recent local accomplishments under this framework. As federal, state and local governments engage in debating resource allocation, the public will be served well by becoming more aware of the impact and role of local Community Action Agencies. As staff, we are privileged to serve our community.

## Human Services Department Uses of Funds

Total \$15,686,404

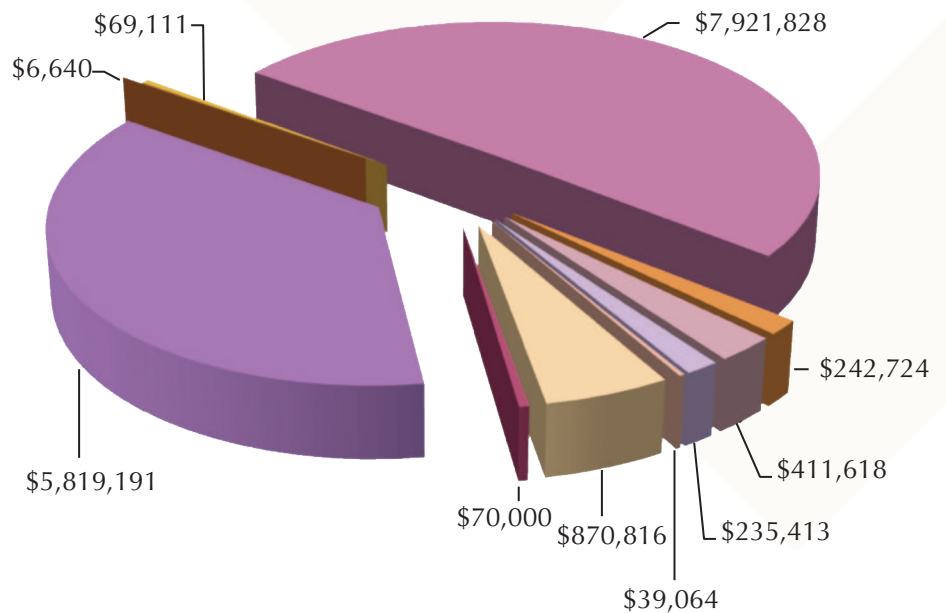
- Head Start
- Community Services
- Weatherization
- LIHEAP



## Sources of Funds

Total \$15,686,404

- City of Rockford
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Illinois Association for Community Action Agencies



- Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Housing Development Authority

- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

## OUR CITY, OUR COMMUNITY, OUR STORY



### THE PICTURE OF POVERTY - CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

- 34% of Rockford's children live in poverty.<sup>i</sup>
- Research has suggested that living in poverty in the early childhood years can lead to lower rates of school completion.<sup>ii</sup>
- As economies become more global, the ability to compete will depend on knowledge based workforces.<sup>iii</sup>

### THE PICTURE OF POVERTY - NUTRITION AND HEALTH

- Six census tracts in Winnebago County have been identified as food deserts. This means that there is low/no access to a supermarket or large grocery store.<sup>iv</sup>
- Preventing hunger allows children to develop both physically and mentally. "They will be more likely to perform well in school, they will stay in school longer. And then at adulthood, IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) has actually demonstrated that children that were better nourished have higher wages, by a pretty large number, by 46 percent."<sup>v</sup>



### THE PICTURE OF POVERTY - ENERGY

- Over one-third of the increase in the U.S. poverty rate in 2010 resulted from the rapid rebound in oil prices, using the Census Bureau's methodology. The increased cost of gasoline at the pump was enough to push just under one million Americans into poverty.<sup>vi</sup>

## IMPORTANT INITIATIVES BY COMMUNITY ACTION IMPACTING POVERTY

### CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

- The Rockford School District is investing in Preschool For All and partnering with Head Start.
- Our investments in reducing underage drinking through Sticker Shock, classroom education and media campaigns are paying off with fewer youth reporting underage alcohol use.



### NUTRITION AND HEALTH

- Community gardens are being developed and maintained in both Boone and Winnebago Counties, with over forty of those developed and supported by Community Action.



### ENERGY

- The Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) was implemented in 2011 with over 550 households in Boone and Winnebago Counties participating in budget plans to lower their utility costs.
- Weatherization services greatly expanded under ARRA with over 500 low-income housing units made more energy efficient.

# OUR RESULTS IN COMMUNITY ACTION

## GOAL #1: Low Income People Become More Self Sufficient

### 1.1 Employment

- Through Community Action, 14 out of 16 persons in the program became employed, an 88% success rate

### 1.2 Employment Supports

- Completed ABE/GED and received certificate or diploma - 104
- Obtained health care - 793
- Obtained non-emergency energy assistance - 10,047

### 1.3 Economic Enhancement

- Ability to complete and maintain a budget over 90 days - 568 out of 673 participants (84%)



## GOAL #2: The Conditions in Which Low Income People Live are Improved

### 2.1 Community Improvement and Revitalization

- Obtained/maintained safe and affordable housing - 548
- Reduced blight - 31

### 2.2 Community Quality of Life Assets

- Supported the development and maintenance of over 100 neighborhood organizations through Neighborhood Network

### 2.3 Community Engagement

- Number of community members mobilized by Community Action that participated in community revitalization and anti-poverty initiatives - 2861
- Number of volunteer hours donated to Community Action - 28,440

## GOAL #3: Low Income People Own a Stake in Their Community

### 3.1 Number of volunteer hours donated by low income people

- 23,383 hours were donated to Head Start, gardens and other projects

### 3.2 Number of low income people participating in formal community organizations, government boards or councils

- 34 low income persons served on boards or councils

## GOAL #4: Partnerships Among Supporters and Providers of Services to Low Income People are Achieved

### 4.1 Number of community partnerships - 84



## **GOAL #5: Agencies Increase Their Capacity to Achieve Results**

### **5.1 Agency staff development**

- Number of Certified Community Action Professionals - 2
- Number of Family Development Certified staff - 21
- Number of Child Development Certified staff - 49



## **GOAL #6: Low Income People, Especially Vulnerable Populations, Achieve Their Potential by Strengthening Family and Other Supportive Environments**

### **6.1 Seniors obtain or maintain independent living**

- Over 200 seniors received Weatherization services reducing energy costs and increasing stability

### **6.2 Family Development**

- Child immunizations obtained through Head Start - 793
- 100% of children enrolled in Head Start and 98% of children enrolled in Early Head Start have an ongoing source of continuous and accessible, routine, preventive and acute medical care
- 94% of Head Start children and 75% of Early Head Start children were determined by a health professional to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age
- 95% of children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start received preventive dental exams



- Child education outcomes are tracked annually - Assessments are completed three times during each school year - The greatest educational gains during 2010-11 were in the areas of science, math and literacy
- Summer Food Program provided over 2,500 nutritious meals for school age children
- Head Start children fed - 632
- Garden produce donated to pantries - over 10,000 pounds
- School readiness - 793 Head Start children

- Youth avoiding risk-taking behavior - 5,230 through Drug Free
- Youth increase academic or social skills for school - 36 through our Boone tutoring program
- Parents improve parenting skills - 1,333
- Adults improve family functioning skills - 76 through our advocacy program for DCFS involved families and youth aging out of foster care

## **Other Highlights...**

- Our efforts to reduce underage drinking are gaining ground with standing room only town hall meetings, and youth involved in compliance checks and sticker shock campaigns.
- For the past three years, our community garden efforts have expanded each year.
- Weatherization began working on multi-family buildings, increasing energy savings and stretching funding.
- The Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) enrolled over 550 participants, lowering their utility costs while placing them on an affordable budget plan.
- Our Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants were fully renewed and a new project was funded providing funds for over ten community agency projects that serve the homeless.



## (Endnotes)

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- i Illinois Kids Count Report
- ii Brooks-Gunn and Duncan, 1997
- iii Educating the 21st Century Workforce, the views of chief human resource officers regarding workforce development August 25, 2010
- iv USDA Food Desert Locator
- v International Food Policy Research Institute
- vi US Census Bureau and Peterson Institute for International Economics